A Brief

Reply

To that Part of

SPIRA'S

Deſpair Reviv'd:

In which

The BAPTISTS in General are concerned, but more eſpecially thoſe at *ASHFORD* in *KENT.*

Wherein

The unjuſt Charge of Mr. *Thomas James* againſt them, is removed.

Maxima eſt veritas atque prævalebit.

Falſe witneſſes did riſe up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not, Pſalm 35. 11.

Written by a *Baptiſt Preacher,* who is a Lover of Truth.

London, Printed 1695.

B

A Brief

Reply

To that Part of

SPIRA'S

Deſpair Reviv'd:

In which

The BAPTISTS in General are concerned, but more eſpecially thoſe at *ASHFORD* in *KENT*.

Wherein

The unjuſt Charge of Mr. *Thomas James* againſt them, is removed.

Maxima eſt veritas atque prævaleb[illegible]

False witneſſes did riſe up; they laid to my charge things that I knew not, Pſalm 35 11.

Written by a *Baptiſt Preacher*, who is a Lover of Truth.

London, Printed 1695.

To the Right Honourable

PHILIP Lord *WHARTON.*

My Lord,

I Humbly presume to present to your Honour this insuing Treatise, being well assured that your Honour is of a temper of mind suitable to make Judgment of higher Matters than what is offered to your View, and doubt not of your Honours kind resentment of this boldness: And I the rather chuse to appeal to your Lordship for Justice in this matter, not only because of your great worth but for that also *Spira's Despair reviv'd*, (written by Mr. *Tho. James*) was dedicated unto your Lordship, in which the *Baptists* are exposed to scorn and disgrace in a most shameful manner, and published to the world, as in his Book it doth and may appear, and doth not assign any person or persons that are guilty of the Fact, (if any be.) And how reasonable that may be, I humbly offer to your

Lordſhip: And this Treatiſe is to inquire after the Guilty, which Mr. *James* (I preſume) ought to aſſign, he being the perſon that doth accuſe: But if he cannot (or do not) whether he ought not as publickly to give ſatisfaction, as he hath ſtained and abuſed us, I alſo commend to your Lordſhips Judgment? not doubting, if your Lordſhip pleaſe to peruſe this little following Treatiſe, but that we may have juſtice done us, in and by the approbation of your Lordſhips Opinion upon this caſe. I humbly beg pardon for my boldneſs to your Lordſhip, and that theſe lines may be acceptable, which will I preſume, mightily oblige our Friends in general, and greatly honour your poor unworthy ſervant, that heartily prays to God for your Honours further Illumination in grace, that may end in eternal happineſs; and beg the Honour of ſubſcribing my ſelf, without Offence, *Your Honours very humble and obedient Servant in the ſervice of Chriſt.*

TO THE
READER.

Courteous Reader,

I *Here preſent unto thee the ſtate of the caſe to be conſidered, Whether Mr.* James *hath been Fair (or unkind) in publiſhing to the world, and charging the* Baptiſts *with ſuch foul Crimes, as all ſober men may be aſhamed of, as in the following Diſcourſe you may obſerve. And that that is deſired, is to make an impartial Judgment of the Matter, without reſpect to Perſons, but to the Truth it ſelf. The great end of this Diſcourſe, is to find out the Offenders that did buſy themſelves to catch a poor Man in deſpair, to make a Proſelyte of him to a Party. Now Mr.* James *doth ſay it was the* Baptiſts. *And our great inquiry is to find out who they are (of them); for till then, the Scandal lyes upon the whole: and how unreaſonable that is, the Reader may judge. But if Mr.* James *will aſſign the perſon or perſons that are Guilty, the Controverſy may the eaſier be decided. Let him only withdraw his general Charge, and that as publickly as he hath laid it. And whether it be not*

reaſonable, let the Reader judge. But if Mr. James *ſhould be guilty, be it ſo; if any other be, Mr.* James *that doth accuſe, muſt find them out; if he cannot, what a ſhameful pickle is he in. Offenders of this kind, ought to be dealt with by the Church; and I do aſſure you, if any of the* Baptiſts *do appear to be guilty; they ſhall be dealt with by the Rule of Gods Word. If Mr.* James *be guilty, the Church he belongs too, Aquits themſelves well to do the ſame. We the* Baptiſts *deſire, that all ſuitable means may be uſed for the accomodation of Peace with Truth, and no true peace can be without it. And wherein I may any ways contribute thereunto, by the Bleſſing of God, and the Aſſiſtance of his Holy Spirit, I hope to be ready, as the matter may require, or find ſuch as may be more fit, which I hope may be acceptable. But if all this will not do, it is to be feared, he is of the Riggideſt ſort of* Presbitery, *and no Man need ſay worſe. But a ſweeter and cooler temper, becomes and adorns the Truth. All which I refer to the Judgment of the Reader, and heartily pray God, that Innocency may prevail, and that all corrupt Practices may be ſubdued.*

I am your Servant
in the ſervice of Chriſt,
J. W.

A Brief REPLY

TO

Mr. *Tho. James*, Minister of the Gospel

(as he stiles himself) at *Ashford* in KENT,

To that Part of his Book,

SPIRA'S *Despair Reviv'd.*

VVherein

He hath manifestly exposed the Baptized Churches, or some of them, as much as in him lyeth, to scorn and reproach; by evil Suggestions, and falsly charging them, as will appear in the followinging Discourse.

He that is first in his own Cause, seemeth just, but his Neighbour cometh, and searcheth him, *Prov.* 18. 17.

To *Mr. Tho. James.*

Worthy SIR,

WHatever your Ends and Aims were in setting forth those Tragical Instances in your Book, we cannot but take Notice, that

ſome part of your Matter was to ridicule, and repreſent the *Anabaptiſts*, (or *Baptiſts* as you ſay, they rather chuſe to call themſelves) to the world as a very weak inſipid People; and yet crafty and induſtrious to catch Men in Deſpair, to make a Party: But, is not this evil ſurmizing, and ſenſoriouſly reflecting on the Innocent? *Pray let your Moderation be known unto all Men, Phil.* 4. 5. and recall your raſh Miſcariage: Or, if you plead Juſtification to what you have affirmed, then we do demand your Proof of the Matter, and that you aſſign the perſon or perſons that you ſay are Guilty (if any be;) and yet it is very hard and unkind, to beſpatter us all with the Miſcarriage of a perſon or perſons (if any ſuch be:) For ſhould we retaliate by way of Diſcrimmination, we might aſſign many very groſs and notorious Faults very Criminal, even in many of your Teachers: But to render raiing for railing is not Chriſtian-like. We had much rather over-come Evil with Good; and had not you publickly ſtained us upon Record, we might have born it; or had it been only out of the Lew'd and vain Peoples Mouths, we might have taken it patiently. But for Mr. *James* (that makes a fair ſhew of Religion,) to deal thus by us, we may ſay with *David*, *Pſal.* 55. 12. *For it was not an Enemy that reproached me, then could I have born it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnifie himſelf againſt me*: But one that pretends great Reformation in Religion, and calls us his fellow Diſſenters, nay ſome of us his worthy good Friends, pious, and judicious; and yet ſuch are not exempted from this foul Calumny. Nor

it

it seems, did you give any satisfaction to our Friends at *Ashford*, when they attended you after the publishing of your Book: but rather aggravated the Crimes (that we doubt not but to assign wherein you are Guilty) by a peevish and uneven Carriage towards them, who have waited long since for satisfaction; and none being given, or like to be, extorts these lines: and as the case stands, we cannot well avoid publishing to the world your unfair Dealing. And we hope, and doubt not, but to support our Innocency.

For *First*, we utterly disclaim the obtaining of Proselytes, as you most unworthily do suggest, and represent us to do.

And *Secondly*, if any person or persons have been so weak (or worse) they ought to be admonished for it; and we desire you to assign the Guilty, that we may clear our selves of this foul Scandal, or else we presume all is a fiction of your own brain, and with a malitious design to bespatter and abuse us.

Yet we should be glad of any Reasonable Demonstration that it is not so, and would willingly understand you in the true Sense you do intend it. Such Charity need you not doubt of from us in General, as also in particular from,

Sir, Yours to serve you in all
Christian Duties wherein I may,

John Wells.

James

NOW we ſhall take notice of ſome Paſſages in your book. In the fourth Section in the 39*th*. page, to the 46*th*. wherein you labour to ſet forth, how we contributed to the *Poor Man's Affliction*, in Deſpair; and tell us thus, *viz.* "Once I was called to a Man in our Neigh-"bourhood, one *R. M.* whoſe condition was "deplorable, and the occaſion of his Trouble as "ſtrange, and his end as lamentable, by laying "violent hands on himſelf, and deſtroying his "own Life. And then you further tell us of the Diſcourſe you had with him, and what you adviſed him too; but it ſeems it was all in vain: for your Diſcourſe, Prayer and Advice did not give him any help or eaſe. But you ſay, *viz.* "After ſome Diſcourſe and Prayer, I adviſed "according to my weak Judgment, what courſe "to take, and what means to uſe, referring him "for his Body to a Phyſitian, and ſo departed.

Firſt, we obſerve, that you were the only Man that viſited, diſcourſed, and adviſed this poor Man in his deplorable Eſtate; and when you had done what ſeemed meet unto you, you departed. So that it ſeems you had all the opportunity that was neceſſary to adviſe, admoniſh, and inſtruct him, but could not make a Proſelyte of him: Yet you condole him, and complain of ſome that you ſay, who finding the poor Man in this Trouble, thought to make a Proſelyte of him; and how this may appear we muſt further examine: And to repeat your own words, they are thus, *viz.* "But I would "what follows had not hapned; tho' I do not "charge the miſchief abſolutely upon the Par-"ties to be mentioned, yet 'tis pity they act-"ed ſo inconſiderately, and did ſo much wrong.

Reply

Reply First, As you would what had followed had not happened; what sober Man would not have been of that mind? But *Secondly*, you say, tho' you do not charge the Mischief absolutely upon the parties to be mentioned. We desire to know how much of the Mischief is absolutely upon the parties, and who these parties be? And *Thirdly*, 'Tis pity, (*say you*,) they acted so inconsiderately, and did so much wrong. *Did so much wrong*; is not that charging some Mischief absolutely? Doubtless it is. And therefore to know how much wrong and mischief was done to this poor Man (if any,) and by whom is our great Inquiry. Mr. *James* was the Man chiefly concerned with him in his hurry and trouble of mind; but to the end he may not be thought remiss, and the better to seem clear, he finds out some to be mentioned, that he says did so much wrong: and assigns a sort of people that would proselyte him, and the manner of doing it: and how they puzzled afresh his weak disturbed Head. Which take in his own words thus, *viz.* "There "were a sort of people about him, who find- "ing the poor Man in this Trouble, thought "to make a Proselyte of him, and presently "fare in, and told him, his way to have peace "and comfort was to be *Dipped*, that his *In- "fant Baptism* was of no value, and not to be "trusted in as any thing yielding spiritual profit "and comfort. With this New Doctrine they "puzzled afresh his weak disturbed Head.

Reply First, what sort of people were those that were about him? and who are they which finding this poor Man in this trouble, thought to make a proselyte of him? If you do not assign

assign the persons that did this, it must be concluded to be an evil Suggestion of your own: and because you could not proselyte him to your self, you are disturbed at others. *Secondly*, You do say, they presently sate in with him, and told him, his way to have peace and comfort was to be *Dipped*. Now this Mr. *Fames* doth positively charge upon them; and therefore he must hear or see this done, or else he hath published he knows not what. And *Thirdly*, That his *Infant Baptism* was of no value, and not to be trusted in as any thing yielding spiritual profit and comfort. The truth is, if any Man ask the Question whether it doth or no, it must be answer'd in the Negative. But that his way to have peace and comfort was to be *Dipped* without any other consideration, is very improbable that any should be so weak as to advise it. Nor does it appear that any did, but by an evil surmise of your own. And it seems if they could not admit that his *Infant Baptism* would yield him any spiritual profit or comfort, this new Doctrine (as you call it, meaning *Dipping*) must needs puzzle a fresh his weak disturbed Head. But that *Dipping* should be a New Doctrine in your esteem, seems strange to us: or that any that pretends to be a Minister of the Gospel (and especially a Scholar) should so affirm. For you cannot be ignorant, but that *Baptizo* is to *Dip*, and is allow'd and approved to be so by the *Lexicons*, *Dictionaries*, and all approved Authors that are Orthodox; and its rare to find a Scholar so weak as not for to allow it. But *Sprinkling of Infants* is indeed a New Doctrine, a Scriptureless thing, that is not to

be

be found from the beginning of *Geneſis* to the end of the *Revelations*; and it is probable this poor Man might be ſenſible of that; for he was a Hearer of the *Baptiſts* ſome Years before he ever heard Mr. *James*: And therefore its very probable Mr. *James* might very much puzzle his weak diſturbed head, if he preſt him to believe his New Doctrine of *Sprinkling of Infants*, or that his *Infant Baptiſm* would yield him any ſpiritual profit or comfort: This might puzzle him indeed. And ſaith Mr. *James*, "Whereas the poor Man ſtood in need of ſo-"lid Inſtruction ſuitable to his Malady; eſpe-"cially, that the Devices of Satan ſhould be laid "open to him, and his ignorant Mind inſtruct-"ed in thoſe Scriptures by him perverted; and "the Doctrine of God in Chriſt cleared to him. "Inſtead of ſuch Applications, they buſily in-"fuſed this Notion, and this preſently filled "him with a new Diſorder.

Firſt, We grant this poor wretch ſtood in need of ſolid Inſtructions ſuitable to his Malady, as you ſay: But was this ſolid and ſuitable to his Malady, to inſtruct him, and make him believe, his *Infant Baptiſm* was comfortable and profitable to him? No: This was perverting of the Scripture, which might very reaſonably puzzle his weak Head; for had he ſtudied them, and read them all over, he could never have found *Sprinkling* or *Baptizing of Infants* there; and to be wiſe above what is written, might very well put him into confuſion; which (as you ſay) *you could better gueſs than expreſs.* But you could do neither of them well, as every Reader may judge that is conſiderate.

And

And thus was he hurried in his Mind, and ſuffered (it is probable) not a little, by that blind Zeal of yours, or Scripture-leſs Notion. And further ſay you, *viz.* "Now he queſtioned "his Religion, and doubts of his Opinion and "Principles, he was in no condition to conſi-"der of thoſe important Matters, and yet he "dared not deſiſt: This became a new Mat-"ter of confuſion, and how great it was, I was "better able to gueſs than to expreſs it, and "leave every Reader to judge: Thus was he "hurried in his mind, and ſuffered not a little "by this blind and inconſiderate Zeal; at laſt "it ended in a perfect Diſtraction. [And the "poor Man cut his Throat.]

Reply, As to his queſtioning his Religion, and doubts of his Opinion and Principles, we know not that ever he were ſetled in any, unleſs you had ſetled him in yours, by hearing of you, or by your Inſtruction; which if he were, you beſt know. Or how he came to be unſetled you that were converſant with him, may better give an Account than we. For tho' he were a Hearer ſome Years amongſt us, before Mr. *James* came into theſe parts, yet he never was ſetled with us: For we receive no Proſelytes upon ſuch eaſy terms as Mr. *James* doth ſuggeſt, or as Mr. *James* himſelf doth. For could we receive them by virtue of their being *ſprinkled* in their Infancy, we might multiply to much greater Numbers than we do. But if Mr. *James* ſhould alledge his *Infants Sprinkling* or *Baptiſm*, as a ſpiritual profit and comfort to him, this might hurry his Mind; for he had been better taught before he knew Mr. *James*, tho' he complyed not with it. And

th

that salve of *Sprinkling* in his Infancy were applyed to him for his spiritual Sore, it might very well Distract him, and he suffer not a little by such inconsiderate and blind zeal. And it is to be lamented, that the poor Man should cut his Throat, and that suitable means had not been used both for Body and Soul. But Mr. *James* is mightily to be suspected, that he had no suitable Salve for his spiritual Sore; for it seems to me by the Account I have, That this Man had not been at the *Baptist Meeting* for some Years; but falling into Trouble of Mind, and in an unsettled state, returns to hear the *Baptists*. At which Mr. *James* bestirs himself, to persuade him, That his *Infant Baptism* was true Baptism, and to go to Town to Board, and make use of a Physician of his own way, and to hear him, which was done; but the poor man grew weary, not liking the means that was used: And it seems, and as he told his Sister, That they were in a consult what to do about him (one Day;) and unexpected to them, he overheard them, and one said, *He was in love*; and another said, *He had not a dram of true Grace.* But he hearing this, it made an addition to his weak disturbed Head, and gets away, and relates the matter to his Sister, and so waxes worse and worse, till at last he ends his life. Now if this be so, then all this slur to bespatter the *Baptists*, is to clear your self. But you are the more intangled, and are taken in the Snare you laid; and I could wish there had been no occasion to discover it. But you tell us, *viz.* *'Tis besides my purpose to make Reflexion upon Persons of any Opinion, or Persuasion in Religion, beside Atheists.* And yet you very unworthily

thily do it in the next breath; and that the world may be sure to know who you mean, you repeat the Name *Anabaptists*, as you falsly put upon them; and say, What they rather chuse to call themselves *Baptists*. But to use your own words, you say thus, *viz.* "The *Anabaptists*, or "the *Baptists*, as they rather chuse to call "themselves, are Men to whom I bear no such "grudge or envy, as to bring up any evil "Report upon them, as a Calumny, or unjust "Accusation: God forbid, that whilst I am "writing for Christianity, I should act so con- "trary to one of its Principles, as to do thus.

Reply, Pray Sir, who can be so blind as not to see you do thus: *First*, without any respect to any particular person or persons, but in general the *Anabaptists* or *Baptists*, *&c.* And *Secondly*, You flatter and pretend you bear no such Grudge or Envy, as to bring up any evil Report upon them as a Calumny, and unjust Accusation, and become guilty as in *Exodus* 23. 1. *Thou shalt not raise a false Report.* But this you have done like the Enemies of God: *Report said they, and we will report it*, Jer. 20. 10. Sir, it is a grief unto us, that we are forced to discrimminate upon you, to shew your weakness, and that is too apparent; pray God it be no worse. But you further say, *viz.* "They are Christians, and "will I doubt not espouse this cause of our Lord "with my self, and there are some of them my "worthy good Friends, pious and judicious "persons; but this I must publish upon this sad "occasion, (and I pray God the Guilty would "consider it:) If a Man or Woman come un- "der trouble of mind, and they spy it out, or "if any one newly be joyned to their fellow-

"Dissenters

"Diſſenters of other Opinions, immediately they "ſet upon them, thinking that now is their time "to proſelyte them to their Party.

Reply, Sir, what Flattery is this! or rather Sophiſtry, to make a thing ſeem to be what it is not. Will you pretend Chriſtian Friendſhip, and ſeem to eſteem us your worthy good Friends, pious and judicious, and yet at the ſame time, tell us, You muſt publiſh us to be otherwiſe, to ſhew how Guilty your pious judicious Friends have been, as you are pleaſed to ſuggeſt. For *Firſt*, If a Man or Woman (*ſay you*) be in trouble of mind, and they ſpy it out: Here you repreſent us as a ſubtil cunning people, to ſpy out ſuch as are in trouble of mind, and take that opportunity to proſelyte them to a party. *Secondly*, When they are newly joyned to their fellow Diſſenters, then is the time to get a Proſelyte. And theſe are your pious judicious Friends, for whom you pretend a great Eſteem. Are you not like thoſe in *David's* time, *Pſal.* 55. 20. 21. that put forth his hands againſt ſuch as be at peace with him: *The Words of his mouth were ſmoother than Butter, but War was in his Heart: his Words were ſofter than Oyl, yet were they drawn Swords.* And is not this great Ingratitude, tragically to cut the throat of your Friends Reputation, both Religiouſly and otherwiſe, that is, as Men and Chriſtians. Alas! its to be ſuppoſed, you have loſt ſome of your Diſciples, makes you ſo peeviſh, pettiſh, froward, and unkind to your Friends. But if wherein you have blackned and blaſted them, if it ſhould not be true, how ridiculous will you appear to your Friends and Neighbours; nay, and to the whole world. But if you pretend to plead Juſtification,

tion, do not ſpare us, nor any particular perſon of us, but that we may purge out the Guilty, if any be; but it ſeems as yet, thou art the man. In the next place, you come to ſhew what Argument is uſed to obtain this Proſelyte, and that is ſay you, "They urge *Dipping*, and lay ſuch "ſtreſs upon it, that they make it a ſalve for "every ſpiritual ſore, and make all Religion in "going down into the Water.

Reply, Now Sir, herein you ſhew your ignorance, or at leaſt your malice, which is worſe (againſt *Dipping*) taking the boldneſs to charge us with what is poſſitively falſe, as if it were on purpoſe to ridicule the Truth, or the people that profeſs it (or both): for all good Chriſtians, nay, them that are but half Chriſtians that know us well, do know and can teſtify, if need be, That we are ſo far from making Going down into the Water a ſalve for every ſpiritual ſore, that we cannot admit it, until the perſon deſiring it, *do bring forth Works meet for Repentance*, being truly humbled for their Sins or ſpiritual Sores, and be converted, *Acts* 3. 19. Or as ſaith our Saviour, *Repent, and believe the Goſpel*, *Mark* 1. 15. And as the Apoſtle *Paul* taught, both to the *Jews* and to the *Greeks*, *Repentance towards God, and Faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, Acts 20. 21. Thus Repenting of their Dead Works, and believing the Goſpel, that is to have faith in the blood of Jeſus, and that he died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification; and not till then do we go down with them into the Water to *Dip* or *Baptize* them, and then do we bury them in the Water by Baptiſm, as in *Rom.* 6. 4. *Col.* 2. 12. And therefore you groſly abuſe us either ignorantly, or worſe. But you further

ſay thus. *viz.* "But alas! what kind of courſe "is this, to take advantage of the bodily Weak- "neſs, and infirmity and confuſion of their minds, "to win perſons, or rather draw them to a "party. How contrary is this to the free and "open preaching of the Goſpel, practic'd by "Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

Reply, But Sir, alas! what courſe is this you take to ridicule an innocent people that abhors the taking the advantage of what you pretend they do, to make a proſelyte to a Party; as if we were ſo greedy of Proſelytes, as that we catch men in Diſtraction? Why, do you think we have need of Mad-men! Or what do you mean by taking advantage of their Weakneſs and Infirmity, and confuſion of Mind, to win or draw to a Party? But pray Sir, do not you muſe, as you uſe? Who has been more buſy and induſtrious than your ſelf with this poor wretch, you make all this Harangue about to draw him to a Party? And upon your ill Succeſs, you raiſe a Clamour upon others, to clear you; and having diged a Pit for them, fall in your ſelf, and muſt be expoſed to open Shame and Reproof; pray God grant you grace unto Repentance: For moſt certainly, this practice of yours hath been mighty contrary to the free and open preaching of the Goſpel, practiſed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles: and I wiſh it might be more the care of all good Chriſtians to keep to that Rule of Chriſt, and then no ſuch evil Surmiſings, Whiſperings, and Backbitings, would appear. But you further ſay, *viz.* "Truth ſeeks not corner, but loves the cleareſt Light, and gets moſt ground when it meets its Enemies in their full ſtrength;

"and

"and they have all the advantage on their ſide "they can wiſh or deſire; to act otherways, "argues a bad Cauſe, or at leaſt a raſh Zeal, "to promote a good one in a wrong way.

Reply, Truly this is manly, and Chriſtianly ſaid. Pray let this be made good on your part: We do believe on our part, we ought to ſeek no Corner; nor are we aſhamed or afraid to meet our Enemy openly. Nay, we will account him our Friend that convinceth us of Error. Let Truth prevail, and no wrong can be done to either Party: Pray therefore let us come to a publick Tryal of the matter: Which if you refuſe this *(as you ſay)* it argues a bad Cauſe, or a raſh Zeal, or both. Let us therefore come to the cleareſt Light, with cool and even Tempers in a friendly manner, with ſincere Endeavours to be at peace by a right Underſtanding; and by the bleſſing of God, I hope we may come to an amicable concluſion; if you can but ſubmit to recede from your Errors (if any be,) and wherein it appears we are guilty, we ſhall, I hope, ſubmit. And in your following Diſcourſe, you ſeem much concerned, wiſhing ſuch Proceedings might be laid down. Now what Proceedings theſe are, I ſuppoſe to be the irregular Practices thoſe *Anabaptiſts*, as you call them, have taken, as you ſay. But your Words are *viz.* "Would to God ſuch Proceedings might "be laid down, and men do ſo no more, a "upon my own Experience, and not a ſingle "one only they have done. Let Chriſtians "labour to build up one another in Faith in "Chriſt, in love to God and Man, and ſtir up "one another to good Works; and beware

ho

"how they trouble themſelves, or their Breth-
"ren (eſpecially at ſo unſeaſonable Times,)
"with Queſtions tending to endleſs Strife and
"Debate, raiſing Doubts and Scruples, and
"ſtriking Dread and Terror into ignorant and
"weak Souls, making them to queſtion their
"eternal Welfare, if they do not preſently ſub-
"ſcribe their Principles. But enough of this;
"yet I hope not too much, becauſe my matter
"leads me to it, and cannot but judge it ne-
"ceſſary; God grant it may be profitable.

Reply Firſt, You pray God they would do ſo no more, as upon your own Experience, and not a ſingle one as they have done. Then it ſeems ſeveral are guilty as upon your own Experience (as you ſay:) Pray be pleaſed to bring them out of their Corners, and bring them to the light, that their Deeds may be reprov-ed, and the Innocent may not ſuffer with the Guilty. If this be not done, and you do not aſſign the Criminals, it muſt be concluded you cannot; and then in what a ſhameful caſe will you appear. *Secondly*, That Chriſtians ſhould labour to build up one another in Faith in Chriſt, and love to God and Man: This is good Chriſtian Advice; and had you followed the Advice you give, you could never have clamored, ſlandered, and repreſented us in ſo foul a Dreſs as you have done; and *therefore thou art inexcuſible O Man! whoſoever thou art that judgeſt: For wherein thou judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thy ſelf. For thou that judgeſt, doſt the ſame things*, Rom. 2. 1. *Thirdly*, You adviſe to ſtir up one another to good Works, and beware of troubling themſelves or their

Strife, Sedition, Backbiting, Whiſpering, Swellings, and provoking to evil Works, by troubling your ſelf and the Brethren, by your unkind Reflections without cauſe, (and at ſuch unſeaſonable times) with what tends to endleſs Strife and Debate, raiſing Doubts and Scruples in the Ignorant and Weak, that they may dread ſo pernitious a people, as you repreſent us to be: *Fourthly*, All this you ſay we are guilty of, to ſuch as do not preſently ſubſcribe to our Principles; it were well if you would explain your ſelf better: But if any would know what our Principles are, they may be found in *Heb.* 6. 1. 2. *Fifthly*, (You ſay,) but Enough of this; yet you hope not too much, becauſe your matter lead you to it. Pray what matter could lead you to rake up dirt to throw at us? Why you tell us, "you judged it neceſſary; God grant "it may be profitable.

Reply, I preſume, upon cooler conſideration you will find cauſe to alter your judgment, and that it was neither neceſſary nor profitable, when you come to make good your Charge againſt us. But if you can do it, we ſhall not take it ill, to find out the Guilty, if any be: but ſtill it remains unkind, that you make no better diſtinction between the Nocent and the Innocent: We deſire therefore that you prepare to meet us openly, and aſſign your time and place, and upon reaſonable Notice, ſome of us (God willing) ſhall attend you, to try the matter. And *Firſt*, We do demand of you ſatisfaction to the ſeveral Scandals and Slanders that we ſay, you have unjuſtly laid upon us. *Secondly*, We are ready to try the Cauſe whether *Di*

ping or *Sprinkling* be moſt Antient. And *Thirdly*, We deny *Sprinkling of Infants* to be the Baptiſm of Chriſt. And *Fourthly*, We are ready to prove, that *Dipping* is Baptizing, and that it is according to Chriſt's Inſtitution. Now make good what you ſay, in the 45*th*. page of your Book, "That Truth ſeeks no corner, "but loves the cleareſt Light, and gets moſt "ground when it meets its Enemies in their "full ſtrength; and they have all the Advan-"tage on their ſide they can wiſh or deſire: "To act otherways, argues a bad Cauſe, or "at leaſt a raſh Zeal, to promote a good one "in a wrong way.

Now if you ſpeak as you mean, the whole Deceit that you have alledged, will be by you fully diſcovered, and we deſire it in a friendly manner, without Heats and Paſſions, but with Cool and even Tempers let us debate the matter for Truth's ſake only and not for Victory; in which doing, a right Underſtanding may be had, and all Animoſities laid aſide. *Pray* let us put on Bowels of Charity one for another, with all meekneſs, ſweetneſs, tenderneſs, love and goodneſs, without any corrupt Communication; but that which is *to the uſe of Edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the Hearers*, Epheſ. 4. 29. *Having the Wiſdom that is from above, which is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle and eaſy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hippocriſy*, Jam. 3. 17.

Sir, I am a Stranger to you, and to the whole matter, any otherwiſe then as I meet with it in your Book, (and ſome Friends near you gives ſome Account,) which hath loaded us

with a greater weight than is fit to be born; yet were it not that the pretious Truths of God ſuffers by it, by every ſcoffing *Iſmael* that reads your Book, we could have paſs'd it over in ſilence. But finding no expedient to clear the Truth and Reputation of it, but by a publick Enquiry after thoſe perſons to whom you have laid a heavy Charge; which if you as publickly prove againſt them as you have accuſed them, you acquit your ſelf to ſome good degree. This being done, and the Innocent clear'd, will be a full ſatisfaction; hoping you will be more cautious for time to come, how you publiſh matters ſo unwarily, as (I preſume) you muſt needs be conſcious to your ſelf that you have done. I am ſorry for the occaſion that is given, for me to take this trouble: I am ſure, I do it unwillingly, only for the ſake of the Goſpel and the importunity of ſome Friends, who think me fitter for the Service, than I do of my ſelf; yet, I hope neither to be afraid or aſhamed to contend earneſtly for the faith that was once delivered to the Saints; nor would I be ſenſorious of ſuch with whom I Differ; but charitably and ſoberly, with a readineſs of mind imbrace the Truth from any that are deſirous to communicate the ſame ſearching the Scriptures whether thoſe things be ſo, *Acts* 17. 11. And that we might preſs after the Knowledge of God, according to the Primitive purity of the Goſpel, is the hearty Prayer of an unworthy Servant of Chriſt, *J.*

And as to the Point of *Baptiſm*, we refer that the following Treatiſe, (formerly Written by a